



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 22, 2015

CONTACT: Dewanna Smith
Director of Communications
Office of Mayor A C Wharton, Jr.
O (901) 576-6032 C (901) 574-1494
Dewanna.smith@memphistn.gov

CITY OF MEMPHIS RECIEVES \$3.7 MILLION TO RID HOMES OF LEAD HAZARD MAKING THEM SAFER FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

MEMPHIS, TN – Mayor A C Wharton, Jr., was joined today by Congressman Steve Cohen and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Regional Director Ed Jennings and Program Director Matt Ammon, and Debbie Singleton, Director Housing and Community Development (HCD) to announce that the City of Memphis is receiving from HUD \$3,714,272 for lead hazard reduction. About \$325,000 of that is for supplemental Healthy Homes funding.

The City of Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD) will implement a three-year program to reduce lead hazards in 240 Housing units built before 1978. Also, the grant will fund healthy homes assessments in 65 units. The program will help provide safer homes for low-income families with children. Additionally, HCD will also utilize lead demonstration grant funds to provide credentialed training in the field of lead hazard reduction for at least 65 low-income individuals as lead hazard workers and 15 individuals as lead hazard supervisors, creating employment opportunities for these individuals. These trainings are facilitated through the Renaissance Business Center (RBC) by Ms. Rhonda Brown the phone number is 901-526-9300.

"I appreciate Congressman Cohen's assistance in getting these funds channeled to our City to help rid homes of dangerous lead-based paints that are a known health hazard," said Mayor Wharton. "We are grateful that HUD recognizes the need in our community and we look forward to working with the Shelby County Health department, Memphis Housing Authority, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and local non-profits in administering these grant funds to help protect the health of our low-income families."

Lead is a toxic metal that can cause permanent damage to the brain and other vital organs, especially in children under age six. Houses built before 1978 were most commonly painted with lead based paints until they were banned. Old lead-based paint chips, flakes or turns to dust that can contaminate surfaces throughout the home.

"All Memphians deserve the opportunity to live in safe and healthy homes and I am pleased with today's infusion of federal funds to reduce lead hazards in older buildings throughout our city," said Congressman Cohen.

Property owners with housing built before 1978 are encouraged to take advantage of this program by calling the HCD Lead-Safe Program at 576-7325 or 576-7335 for a free lead-based paint inspection and for more information on how to apply for the program.

Since 1995, HCD has successfully used grant funding from HUD to reduce lead hazards in nearly 1,500 housing units, focusing primarily upon privately owned rental housing occupied by low-income households with children younger than six years old. The 2015 LHRD program will address eligible occupied rental, vacant rental, and owner-occupied housing units. The program will serve all of Shelby County, with highest priority placed on units in which a child with an elevated blood lead level (EBL) resides, second priority placed on units within 12 targeted ZIP code areas, and third priority on units outside the 12 target ZIPs elsewhere in Shelby County. The 12 target ZIP areas include: 38103, 38104, 38105, 38108, 38112, 38116, 38117, 38118, 38119, 38126, 38128, and 38141.

Data show that 28,332 or seven percent of the 399,366 housing units in Shelby County were built prior to 1940. Approximately 9,916 of the 28,332 pre-1940 units (35%) are occupied rental housing. These statistics qualify Memphis for LHRD funding targeted for urban jurisdictions.

###

Under the leadership of Mayor A C Wharton Jr. since 2009, Memphis is becoming a City of Choice by focusing on creating safe and vibrant neighborhoods, investing in young people, creating economic opportunities for all, and delivering excellence in government. Memphis is famous around the world for the convergence of creativity and innovation that produced its most famous exports – legendary music; the company that invented modern world commerce – FedEx, and the international leader in curing catastrophic childhood illnesses – St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. It has a celebrated entrepreneurial history, more Fortune 500 companies than any other Tennessee city, and it has been named one of the best cities in the U.S. for startups. It is famous as home for Elvis Presley's Graceland, Sun Studios, Stax Museum of American Soul Music, Beale Street, the National Civil Rights Museum, and the most unspoiled riverfront on the Mississippi River. City of Memphis, which employs more than 6,000 people with an annual budget of approximately \$650 million, has developed and led programs that have dramatically reduced crime, increased jobs, improved Memphis' quality of life, and attracted national attention and investments in the city. For more information visit www.memphistn.gov.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 22, 2015

CONTACT: Dewanna Smith
Director of Communications
Office of Mayor A C Wharton, Jr.
O (901) 576-6032 C (901) 574-1494
Dewanna.smith@memphistn.gov